ON THE GRAND

On the Grand is a quarterly publication distrubuted by the Grand River Conservation Authority to member municipalities and other interested persons and groups. It contains capsule news items concerning Conservation Authority programs and projects throughout the valley. Comments and suggestions will be welcome.

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New Members of Executive

GRCA Chairman Archie MacRobbie (centre) welcomes (from left) new Vice-Chairman Ron Eddy, and Members Mabel Dougherty, Barry Lee and Douglas King to their new positions on the Conservation Authority Executive Committee.

New Executive Members

Archie MacRobbie was re-elected as Chairman of the Grand River Conservation Authority at its Annual General Meeting which was held in Cambridge at the Administration Centre on February 27. Mr. MacRobbie, who is also Reeve of Puslinch Township, opens his second term as Chairman. Ron Eddy, who is Reeve of South Dumfries Township, was elected as Vice-Chairman. Mr. Eddy replaced Mary Welsh of Brantford, who retired as Vice-Chairman and GRCA member. Three new Executive Committee members elected by the General Membership were Mabel Dougherty (Reeve of Onondaga Township), Barry Lee (Councillor, Town of Milton) and Douglas King (Businessman, Cayuga).

In addition to the election of the Executive Committee, the Conservation Authority budget and the reduction of the General Membership were under consideration. The General Membership approved the Conservation Authority's 1991 budget of $20,859,600, which constitutes an increase of 1.2% over the 1990 budget. Municipal levies to the Authority across the Grand River watershed increased by an average of 6.0%.

Members also approved in principle reducing the number of GRCA members from the present 45 to approximately 24. Discussions will be held with watershed municipalities concerning membership reduction. A report summarizing the results of these discussions will be submitted to the membership.

Conserving Water and Land Resources for 25 years

The GRCA is 25 years young this year, although it has over 50 years of history behind it. In 1966 the former Grand River Conservation Commission and the Grand Valley Conservation Authority amalgamated to become the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Conserving Water and Land Resources for 25 years
General Manager G.M. (Mac) Coutts stands in a grove of reforested trees on the grounds of the GRCA Administration Centre in Cambridge. Mr. Coutts is one of five Conservation Authority employees who have completed over 25 years of service. (Photo: Kitchener-Waterloo Record)

The Grand Valley Conservation Authority was established in 1948, but the Grand River Conservation Commission can trace its roots back to 1932. The amalgamated Conservation Authority was still a relatively young organization in 1974 when many watershed municipalities experienced serious flooding following a major storm in May of that year.

The May 1974 flood, and the resulting Royal Commission Inquiry provided many of the recommendations for the refined flood control and water management techniques that the Conservation Authority has in place today.

The Guelph Dam, which opened in 1976, now provides flood control and low flow augmentation on the Speed River. Extensive flood protection work in Cambridge and Brantford has almost been completed. The advent of computers has improved flood warning and river monitoring systems over the years to levels of co-ordination that were not possible in 1974.

Other areas of activity for the Conservation Authority have also experienced dramatic growth. The Authority's Forestry section has been responsible for planting over 15 million trees in the watershed during the last 25 years. Conservation Areas that have opened since 1966 include Brant, Elora Quarry, Guelph Lake, Kiwanis, LaFortune, Laurel Creek and Shade's Mills. The Apps' Mill, Guelph Lake, Laurel Creek and Taquanyah Nature Centres have been established to provide quality outdoor education programs for school boards and community groups in the Grand River watershed.

The Conservation Authority now also takes a more active role in regulating development on floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes in the Grand River valley. In conjunction with public and private sector bodies, Policy and Planning staff are developing watershed plans to ensure that development in small watersheds proceeds appropriately.

A Vision for the Grand River Watershed

Vision and Mission Statements can provide direction for the activities of any organization. Last year, a committee of GRCA staff and members developed Vision and Mission Statements to provide guidelines for the management activities of the Conservation Authority. As the GRCA begins its 25th year of resource management work, the Vision Statement points to a positive future:

"The vision of the Grand River Conservation Authority is one of a healthy and sustaining relationship between the natural environment of the Grand River watershed and the demands on this environment by all forms of life."
Based on this vision:

"The mission of the Grand River Conservation Authority is to conserve the natural processes and resources that support a safe and healthy environment for future generations in the Grand River watershed."

The Vision and Mission statements, and the goals and objectives that support the Mission Statement, provide a focus for the Conservation Authority's attempts to manage our watershed. The complete text is included in the Spring 1991 issue of "Your Valley."

On the Heritage River

Over the centuries, few rivers in Canada have been touched by as much history as the Grand River. Last year, the Grand and its major tributaries was the first Canadian river system in a heavily urbanized area to receive nomination to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. The nomination document recognized the outstanding heritage and recreation values associated with the river that gives its name to our watershed.

Before final designation of the Grand River can occur, a Management Plan must be completed for the river. This plan will be developed in consultation with provincial agencies, special interest groups, and members of the public. Once the Management Plan has been completed and accepted by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board, the Grand River should be designated as a Canadian Heritage River early in 1993. The Canadian Heritage Rivers Board publication on the Grand River's nomination is included with this issue of "On the Grand."

What We Have Learned So Far - Preliminary to speaking to the Annual Flood Co-ordinator's Meeting, Dr. Eve Gruntfest met Conservation Authority staff and toured the Grand River watershed to become acquainted with the GRCA Flood Warning System. She was impressed by the GRCA's efforts to keep development out of the floodplain. During an interview with CKCO-TV, Dr. Gruntfest had a message for residents of the watershed as the spring runoff season approaches, "Pay close attention to the advisories and warnings that are issued" by the Conservation Authority.

Flood Co-ordinators' Meeting

A dynamic and informative speaker gave the keynote address at this year's Flood Co-ordinators' Meeting at the GRCA Administration Centre on February 13. The overall purpose of the meeting was to review the operation of the Grand River Watershed Flood Warning System with appropriate municipal and police officials. Dr. Eve Gruntfest, from the University of Colorado, spoke on "Flood Warning Systems: What we have learned so far." She also screened a videotape, "The Awesome Power," which contained striking footage of severe flooding in the United States. This fascinating video can be borrowed from the Communications Section.

The annual test of the GRCA's Flood Warning Fan-Out system was the best in recent years. Ron Moulton, Manager of Engineering for the GRCA, commented, "Of the 65 municipalities in the valley, 95% acknowledged receipt of the Test message within two hours of it being issued."

Laurel Creek Watershed Plan

Plans for the Laurel Creek Watershed - Laurel Creek Nature Centre Interpreter Liz Leedham is well known to the residents of the Laurel Creek watershed. Her appointment as Public Participation Co-ordinator for the Laurel Creek Watershed Study ensures that public concerns will be incorporated into the study.

Watershed Plans are necessary to ensure that integrated resource management takes place in the small watersheds that flow into the Grand and its major tributaries. The scenic Laurel Creek rises west of Waterloo and flows through this city before joining the Grand River. The plan for this watershed will provide guidelines for orderly development to proceed in this 77 sq. km. watershed. Some of the goals of the plan are to reduce the risk of flooding in this small watershed, and to keep the Creek in as natural a condition as possible.

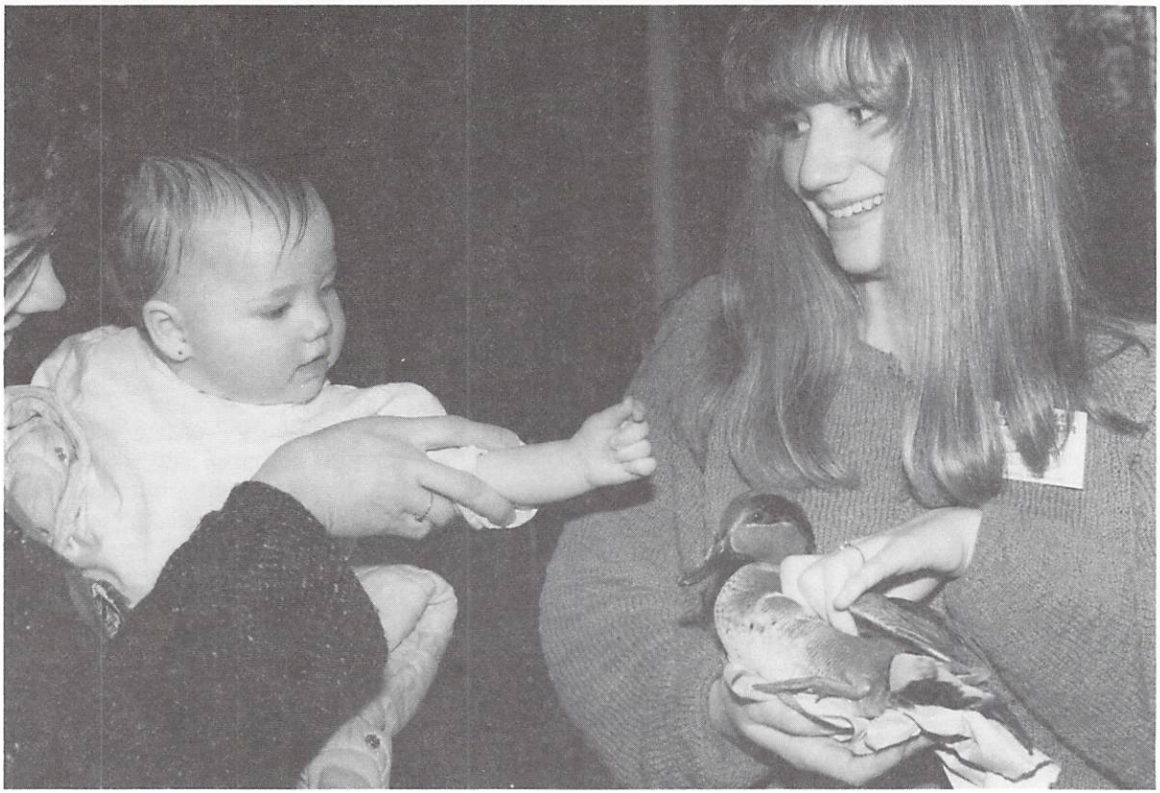
Liz Leedham has been appointed the Public Participation Co-ordinator for this study, in conjunction with her duties as Resource Interpreter at the Laurel Creek Nature Centre. Liz is well known to the residents of the Laurel Creek area, and as Co-ordinator, she will maintain contact with members of the public during the development of the plan.

Her contact will ensure that public concerns are taken into account, and that the public remain informed about the development of the plan. If you need information, or you want to comment on the study, the Laurel Creek Watershed Study Hotline is (519) 725-0318.

Exhibits

Exhibits have the advantage of providing information about the GRCA and its programs to many people in a short period of time. Conservation Authority employees have staffed a number of informative exhibits since the beginning of the year. "Fishing - The Grand Experience" was displayed at the Great Outdoors Sports Show at Bingeman Park and at the Hamilton Boat and Sportsmen's Show. The Canadian Heritage Rivers System exhibit was part of the Heritage Showcase at Fairview Park Mall. Most recently, the Authority mounted a two part Wetlands and Camping exhibit at Bingeman Park's Camperama early in March.

Visitors to all exhibits expressed increased interest in and awareness of the Grand River as a recreational resource. A common comment was, "The river's in much better condition than it was 20 years ago."



Conservation Education Starts Early - A very young visitor to the GRCA Wetlands and Camping exhibit at Camperama stretches to become acquainted with a green winged teal held by Sandra Bilowus. Sandra is working as a co-op student with Fairlake Centre Interpreter Ron Bauman this spring.

Power for Conestogo

The installation of a hydro turbine in a Conservation Authority dam extends the flood control, low flow augmentation and associated recreational uses of the dam. In addition to the turbines in the Shand and Guelph dams, a turbine will be operating soon in the Conestogo dam south of the village of Drayton. After the removal of the 1.2 metre (48 inch) valve from the Conestogo dam last fall, concrete removal in the turbine installation area was concluded. The turbine is expected to be delivered during March, after final assembly and inspection. The new turbine will provide power for the dam, and excess hydro generated will be sold to Ontario Hydro.

Gone Fishing

For many people, the cure for the summertime blues is to go fishing. Your children can learn everything from how to pull in the big ones to understanding fishing regulations at the GRCA Fishing Camps offered this summer.

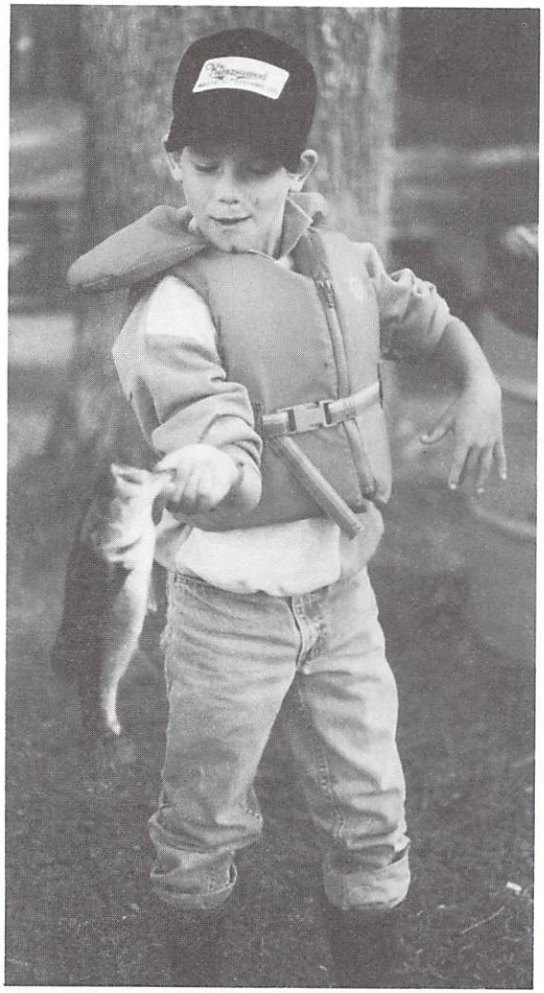
The camps are recommended for children 9-12 years old. To reserve a place, call -

the Guelph Lake Interpretive Centre
at 836-7860
(July 8-10),

the Conestogo Lake Conservation Area
at 638-2873
(July 15-17),

or the Apps' Mill Nature Centre
at 752-0655
(July 22-24).

The cost for these three day camps is $100.00 for each participant. The information provided at the camps will cover a wide range of fishy topics, from fishing techniques and regulations, to fish identification and water safety.



Fish Story - A young fisherman holds a largemouth bass he pulled out of Pinehurst Lake last summer. The GRCA is offering Fishing Camps for children this summer at the Apps' Mill Nature Centre, Guelph Lake Interpretive Centre and at the Conestogo Lake Conservation Area.
(Photo: Ian Welch)

Summer Day Camps

Conservation Day Camps will be held this summer at all four nature centres operated by the Conservation Authority. Students will arrive for camp at 8:30 a.m. and be dismissed at 4:30 p.m.

Apps' Mill Nature Centre
near Paris (519) 752-0655

July 8 - 12
Age 6 - 10 years

August 19 - 23
Age 10 - 12 years

Guelph Lake Interpretive Centre
near Guelph (519) 836-7860

August 5 - 9
Age 6 - 10 years

August 19 - 23
Age 6 - 10 years

Laurel Creek Nature Centre
near Waterloo (519) 885-1368

August 19 - 23
Age 6 - 10 years

Taquanyah Nature Centre
near Cayuga (416) 768-3288

July 8 - 12
Age 6 - 10 years

July 15 - 19
Age 10 - 12 years

August 12 - 16
Ages 6 - 10 years

Cost per student
$100 per week or $25 per day

Enrollment numbers have been set at a minimum of 14 students to a maximum of 20 per camp. Please phone the Nature Centres for further information on these camps.

Whitemans Creek Fisheries

The GRCA is participating with the Ministry of Natural Resources to provide angler access and to undertake biological assessments of Whitemans Creek near Brantford. A small parking lot, located on Cleaver Side Road, on the south side of Whitemans Creek, is being constructed for fishermen with the gravel and trucking being donated by TCG Materials of Brantford.

Conservation Authority Parks Open

All Grand River Conservation Areas will open Saturday, April 27 for the season. The Kiwanis Park in Kitchener will open Saturday June 1st. Fees have increased this year due to GST.

1966 - 1991 *Conserving water and land resources for 25 years.*